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EMPLOYMENT

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Humans subsist by producing and consuming goods along with services and usually the city is the center for this production and consumption. However, some cities are better places for producing goods than others; and like Belmont, they are speciality centers producing, for example, more textiles than they consume. If the work is steady throughout the year, more income is secured for the whole economy including the local city government. More taxes are collected and improved public services can be provided and the citizens are able to purchase more clothes and appliances, and secure better living conditions.

However, in the mid 1960's the employment picture of Belmont and Gaston County presents a paradox. Hundreds of people are seeking jobs. Simultaneously firms, businesses, and industrial establishments are seeking workers, some a few, others many. Mathematically the solution seems simple: fit the available workers to the available jobs. However, anyone who has sought a job or has attempted to hire others knows that the problems of employment seldom yield to any easy solutions. Instead, these problems appear infinitely complex.

In Belmont, as in other cities, only a certain portion of the urban population produces goods and services. Some are too young or too old to work; others are physically or mentally incapable; some do not choose to work. All those individuals fourteen years of age and over and who have a job (housewives are excluded) or who are seeking a job, are called the LABOR FORCE.

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In 1960, more than two out of every five persons living in Belmont were working or seeking work. When only those persons of working ages (14 years and older) are considered, more than one out of every two persons were in the labor force during 1960. (Table 17.)